

As of 2021, Liberty has more than 250,000 alumni making an impact in their respective fields and in their communities.

I congratulate Liberty University and president Jerry Prevo on this milestone and wish the institution another 50 years of success in fulfilling its mission to develop Christ-centered men and women and instill in them the values, knowledge, and skills needed to impact the world.

PROTECTING CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS OF VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, as ranking member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, one of my top priorities is protecting the constitutional rights of our veterans.

Today, I want to raise awareness of a policy that strips law-abiding veterans of their Second Amendment rights; specifically, the policy that requires VA to report veterans who need help managing their VA benefits to the NICS program, thereby making it illegal for them to possess firearms.

To illustrate this practice, I would like to tell you a story about a hypothetical veteran named Joe.

Joe likes to go on hunting trips with his fellow veterans.

These trips are therapeutic for Joe. They give him stress relief and a fun hobby and an opportunity to connect with other veterans.

Unfortunately, Joe begins to suffer from headaches and memory loss, which he believes is linked to an in-service blast injury.

He files a claim for VA disability compensation benefits.

During the claims process, the VA learns that Joe struggles to pay his bills on time because of this traumatic brain injury.

This triggers the VA's requirement to determine if Joe is capable of managing his own VA benefits.

Ultimately, VA decides that Joe requires assistance handling his VA compensation payments.

The VA appoints a fiduciary to receive and manage Joe's VA benefits on his behalf.

As a result of the VA's appointment of a fiduciary, VA must—not by law, but by administrative rule—report Joe to the FBI NICS list.

And just like that, without evidence that Joe is a danger to himself or others, without involving a judge to ensure that Joe's legal rights are protected, without the opportunity for Joe to present his case in court on why he should be able to possess a firearm, Joe loses his Second Amendment rights.

That means that Joe can no longer go on hunting trips with his friends or family.

He can no longer own the hunting rifle his grandfather gave him.

And when Joe's friends learn about it and have learned what happened to

him, they decide that they would rather go without their VA benefits and services, instead of risking the same thing happening to them.

That story may be fictional, but some version of it happens across this United States all the time.

The truth is that some veterans forego seeking VA services out of concern that they would lose their constitutional rights; not because there are laws in place, but there is an administrative rule in place.

According to the VA's regulations, the purpose of the fiduciary program is to protect certain VA beneficiaries who cannot manage their VA benefits.

Clearly, the program was never intended to review someone's right to own a firearm.

A decision on a constitutional right should be left to a judicial authority, plain and simple.

Now, my bill, H.R. 1217, the Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act, would make sure that it is.

H.R. 1217 would prevent VA from reporting veterans to the NICS list, unless there is an order from a judge or magistrate that says the veteran may be a harm to himself or herself or others.

This bill allows VA to focus on its mission of caring for veterans, and leaves decisions about whether to strip a veteran of their constitutional rights to the judicial branch as it is supposed to be and it is for any other person who is not a veteran.

If a court finds that that veteran is a danger to themselves or others, then they should not be allowed to own a firearm.

However, it is time we end this policy that the VA has put in place, and we should make sure that we change this, we correct this problem for veterans that are discouraged from seeking help from the VA because of this rule.

We must make this change. If you want to ensure that veterans who need VA are willing to walk through VA's doors, that is how we do it. We make sure that they know their rights are protected.

I urge swift passage of H.R. 1217.

WASTEFUL SPENDING IS NOT WHAT THE UNITED STATES ECONOMY NEEDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROSE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROSE. Madam Speaker, Democrats are determined to pass their massive socialist tax and spending bill that will turn the American Dream into a socialist nightmare.

Democrats are proposing the largest tax increase in most of our lifetimes. Their \$5.5 trillion plan—Senator BERNIE SANDERS' socialist spending plan—is the largest spending bill in our history and will take Americans out of the frying pan and into the fire.

We need targeted infrastructure improvements, but instead, this style of

cradle-to-grave Big Government gives Washington bureaucrats control over our personal and family decisions.

This spending bill promises to stretch the social safety net to every American household regardless of need. It promises extreme climate change proposals like \$3 billion for tree equity and \$12 billion for electric cars.

It promises subsidized government daycare, taxpayer-funded free college classes for illegal immigrants, universal pre-K, and new funding for gender identity issues and bias training.

The Biden administration is actively trying to gaslight the American people by claiming that this spending package will cost nothing.

Just this morning I heard the President emphasizing a single statement three times that the cost of this plan would be zero. This is an outright lie.

It will be America's middle-class families that foot the bill for Democrats' multitrillion-dollar giveaway through crippling tax increases. This massive package will not deliver opportunity or economic relief, instead it leaves rural America behind and will accelerate inflation, discourage work, and empower Washington bureaucrats.

More wasteful spending is not what our economy needs. It has already contributed to the harmful inflation that Americans across the board are experiencing. Today, inflation is more than 5 percent, the highest it has been in 30 years, more than half of my lifetime and more than the lifetimes of many Americans. Wholesale prices have risen at the fastest pace on record.

Americans do not want a government that defines them. Rather, Americans want to be able to define their own government.

We can meet our country's funding needs without jeopardizing our economic recovery and saddling future generations with more debt.

I ran for Congress because I am worried about the country that we are going to leave to my sons, Guy and Sam, and to the children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren of every American. I cannot in good conscience support a proposal that will mortgage their future, that will imperil their freedom and liberty.

But Democrats are bent on spending massively to enact their radical far-left socialist policies that will change our economy, change our Nation, and change our fiscal future for the worse.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

THE UNITED STATES ECONOMY IS IN TROUBLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today because our economy is in trouble. We are headed in the wrong direction. We must reverse course.

My constituents are paying more today than they were a year ago for basic goods like milk, gas, and bread.

In fact, the national average price for a gallon of gas recently reached \$3.36, more than \$1 higher than it was a year ago and the highest price since October of 2014.

It was also recently announced that core inflation is at a 30-year high.

Inflation has gone up every month since President Biden has been in office.

Inflation is an invisible tax on all Americans, and it especially hurts seniors living on a fixed income.

Out-of-control government spending fuels inflation.

Some of my colleagues seem to believe more spending is the answer.

They have proposed a \$4.3 trillion spending plan coupled with a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure package, both of which are filled with pork, unfortunately.

For example, the spending bill contains billions for job training in climate careers to create a Civilian Climate Corps to promote the Green New Deal; to develop environmental justice initiatives; for housing grants to felons convicted of domestic violence or hate crimes; to benefit, again, 10 million illegal immigrants; and \$200 million for a park in San Francisco.

While I do believe we need to invest in traditional infrastructures such as roads, bridges, internet connectivity, and cybersecurity, only a very small percentage of the proposed infrastructure package funds these types of essential projects, which is wrong. We must spend more on traditional infrastructure and get rid of the perks.

These spending packages would raise taxes on every American, not just the rich.

They will kill American jobs and make us less competitive in the global marketplace.

In the end, it is more frivolous Washington spending, which is the absolute wrong approach, in my opinion, to fixing our economic woes.

It will only make matters worse, Madam Speaker.

Small business owners, who are the backbone of our economy, are having a very difficult time recovering from the pandemic, as you know. Not only are they dealing with the same inflationary pressures that all Americans are experiencing, but they are also facing labor and material shortages.

As we head into the holiday season, consumer demand will only continue to rise.

The supply chain bottlenecks must be resolved immediately to prevent further damage to our economy.

Instead of working together to find common ground and areas about which we can build consensus—that is how we govern—my colleagues on the left, though, seem determined to go it alone. That is the wrong approach, Madam Speaker.

They have spent weeks publicly arguing amongst themselves about how

many trillions of American taxpayer dollars they should spend without any concern to what this out-of-control spending will do to our already struggling economy.

Simply put, this is not how we grow the economy. This is how we grow inflation.

In order to restore our way of life and renew the American Dream, we must implement Trump-era economic policies that yielded unprecedented economic growth, the lowest unemployment levels for minorities in the history of the United States, energy independence—that is what we need—and the highest rise in middle-class wages in decades.

The destructive economic policies of those on the left must be defeated.

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HONORING COACH DOUG SMITH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOOD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the leadership and perseverance of Appomattox County High School coach, Doug Smith.

Doug Smith has led the Appomattox Raiders football team since 2012. Under his leadership, the team has boasted a 32-game winning streak, and won State championship titles in 2015, 2016, and 2017. While Coach Smith's record is amazing, his leadership extends well beyond the field.

Coach Smith has truly united the community behind their team, as evidenced by the large groups on Friday nights. One cannot visit Appomattox County without seeing the impact Coach Smith has made on his students, his coworkers, and the community at large.

Modeling by example, he has taught his student athletes to be productive citizens, such as when the team famously came out in full force to help those affected by the devastating tornado that hit Appomattox in 2016.

However, Coach Smith is best known for his relationship with Jesus Christ, his eternal perspective, and his focus on those things that matter more than football. This has been most clearly displayed since the fall of 2020, as Coach Smith has faced a great personal challenge of his own with a diagnosis of multiple myeloma, a cancer of the plasma cells.

He has been a tremendous testimony through this journey. Thankfully, it appears that the Lord has him on the road to recovery. My continued prayers are with Coach Smith as he continues to fight this terrible disease.

I thank Coach Smith for his commitment to service and leadership. Coach Smith is an inspiration to us all about the importance of serving others, even through personal challenges.

COMMEMORATING SAILORS AND MARINES
ABOARD USS "FORRESTAL" ON JULY 29, 1967

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise to remember and express grat-

itude to the brave sailors and marines who were wounded or lost their lives fighting the catastrophic fire aboard the ship, the USS *Forrestal*.

July 29, 2021, marked the 54th anniversary of one of the most tragic fires in U.S. naval history. On July 29, 1967, the USS *Forrestal*, which was supporting combat operations off the coast of Vietnam, was impacted by an accidental rocket that ignited a fire and triggered several bomb explosions on the flight deck.

Sailors and marines on board, including several Virginians, bravely fought the fire for 18 hours. Despite the courageous efforts of the crew, 134 men died, 161 were wounded, and 21 aircraft were destroyed. Sadly, veterans wounded that day are still fighting their claims with the VA, such as my constituent, Mr. David Cephas Smith, of Vinton, Virginia. These heroes were not awarded the Purple Heart because their wounds did not occur during enemy combat, but their bravery still merits recognition.

We are forever grateful for the service of veterans, like Mr. Smith, who were wounded or sacrificed their lives battling this fire aboard the USS *Forrestal*.

PROTECTING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. JOYCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, in my home State of Pennsylvania, a woman was brutally raped by an illegal immigrant.

In Congress, one of our primary duties is to protect the American people. By allowing illegal immigrants who have committed crimes to remain within our borders signifies that we are failing. Allowing an illegal immigrant who has committed acts of sexual violence to remain in our country shows that we are failing.

Congress must move immediately to pass legislation ensuring that any immigrant who commits acts of violence is deported. What happened in Philadelphia this week was a failure of American leadership. It showed clearly that the Biden crime crisis is escalating.

Now, as apprehensions at our southern border hit record highs, President Biden is taking away the vital resources that our Border Patrol agents need to do their job. The answer to stopping our border crisis and our crime crisis is not to defund the police. The answer is not to be more lenient on illegal immigrants who have committed violent crimes against Americans.

We must put the safety of the American citizens first, and we must put the security of the American citizens first.